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The Limitations upon the Power of the Hebrew Kings

A STUDY IN HEBREW DEMOCRACY

Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

BY

M. WILLARD LAMPE

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
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TO MY FATHER

TO WHOM I OWE ALL MY INTEREST IN
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Acknowledgment

For kindly interest and helpful suggestion, I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., and Assistant Professor James A. Montgomery, of the University of Pennsylvania, and to Professor Albert T. Clay, of Yale.

To Thomas Nelson & Sons my thanks are due for permission to quote from the American Standard Bible.

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The Limitations upon the Power of the Hebrew Kings.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Origin and General Nature of the Limitations.

The estimate which the Old Testament puts upon the Hebrew monarchy varies according to the age and point of view of its different writers. On the whole, the earlier writers seem more favorable to it than the later. When the later ones praise it, the eschatological or ideal, not the historical kingdom, is meant. Budde thinks that "bei weitem überwiegt, am Anfang wie am Ende, und selbst in der Mitte nicht ohne kräftige Vertretung, die günstige Anshauung von Königtums, die es von dem Gotte Israels selbst seinem Volke zum Segen eingesetzt weiss."[1] There are many passages which lend support to this view; e. g. the account of Saul's selection in 1 Sam. 9-10: 16, the divine covenant with the House of David in 2 Sam. 7, and the numerous passages in which David is called "The Servant of Yahweh," and the Davidic kingship viewed as a type of the glories of the coming age.[2] But so far as the purely historic kingship is concerned, the growth of a decidedly unfavorable view becomes apparent with the successive writers. Indeed, the conception of a future ideal monarchy was doubtless stimulated by a sense of the failure of the historic monarchy. *The Law of the King,* in Deut. 17: 14-17, and *the Manner of the King,* in 1 Sam. 8: 11-18, reveal the kind of grievances which led the people to complain and the prophets to protest against their kings. Hosea's attitude is very clear. In 2: 2, he calls the coming king simply a

[1] Budde: Schätzung des Königtums im A. T., S. 32.

[2] See also Gen. 17: 6, 16; 35: 11; 49: 10, 26; Num. 23: 21; 24: 7; Deut. 33: 16.

r'oš, and his remarks in 13:4, 10, 11, seem to indicate that he thought there was no place at all for a human kingship in a theocracy. Cornill interprets Hosea as teaching that the state was "ein Anflehnung gegen Gott," and that in the future there would be no king or princes or politics.[3] The Books of the Kings, in their final form, condemn, without exception, the rulers of the kingdom of Israel, who "departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam," and as for the kings of Judah, the majority are condemned for doing "that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah."[4] Ezekiel utterly discards the term *melek* in his description of the coming Davidic ruler, and substitutes for it the colorless word *nasi'*,[5] which can be used as a designation for any chief or distinguished man.[6] But some of the prophets go even farther than this, and in their pictures of the latter days fail to mention any kind of a human monarchy at all. This is true e. g. of Isaiah 40-48, Joel 3 and Malachi 3-4. These facts can be explained only on the theory that the monarchy never really became part and parcel of Hebrew life. The institution was brought into being as a necessity, its advantages were appreciated, and its greater representatives called forth the praise and fostered the pride of the nation, but all along one cannot avoid the impression that "the kingdom could never find," as Graetz puts it, "a natural place in the system of Israel's organization, but was at all times regarded by more discerning minds as a foreign element."[7]

This view is further borne out by the fact, which it will be the purpose of this thesis to show, viz: that the monarchy in Israel was subject to certain checks and balances, which, in varying degree, circumscribed the power of the kings and safeguarded the liberties of the people. In this chapter, it is proposed to indicate the origin and general nature of these checks.

To understand Semitic temperament, one must study Arabia and the Arab. Renan's opinion that "C'est vraiment

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[3] Cornill, Der Israelitische Prophetismus. S. 55.

[4] All Bible quotations in English are from the American Standard Version, published by Thomas Nelson and Sons.

[5] See *e. g.* Ezek. 34: 24; 37: 25; 45: 7. In 37: 22, 24, *melek* is used, but the *LXX* avoids the term.

[6] Comp. Gen. 23: 6; Ex. 16: 22; 22: 27; Num. 1: 16, 44.

[7] Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. I, p. 81.

l'arabie qui doit être prise pour mesure de l'esprit sémitique,"[8] is shared generally by scholars today. In the pre-Islamic Arab and the modern Bedouin, we see the type of the ancient Hebrew. The outstanding trait of this type may be expressed as *a strong individualism within the tribal bond.* In the wilderness and desert of Arabia, every individual must, for his own protection, attach himself to some tribe, but within the tribe he is a free man. He is subject, of course, to the customary law of the community, violation of which would mean death or banishment, but he is under no necessity of yielding to the external authority of any one or group of his tribesmen. In spite of the strength of the religious and blood bonds, the individual can leave one camp and join another, and whole clans can desert one tribe and attach themselves to another.[9] No majority is big enough to coerce the individual. "Selbst der Versuch," says E. Meyer, "ein einzelnes widerstrebendes Geschlecht oder Individuum unter dem Willen der Mehrheit zu zwingen, wurde als unberechtigte Gewaltsamkeit gelten, die zu Blutfehde und Zersprengung des Stammverbandes fuhrt."[10] It cannot be claimed for the Arabs of the present day that they compare favorably in all points with their progenitors of pre-Islamic times, but this passion for individual freedom seems to have remained unimpaired. Its fierceness has been displayed in connection with the attempts made by the Turkish government to conscribe the Arabs in the Turkish army, and in their preference for death rather than submission to this abridgment of their personal freedom.[11]

One of the corollaries of Semitic individualism is *lack of capacity for political government.* Only strong pressure, such as dire need, religious motive or despotic power, has ever formed Semites into an organized state. Not until the time of Darius, the Persian, did any government in western Asia possess corporate unity.[12] The Semites seem always to have proceeded on the theory of maintaining the independence of the smallest social unit consistent with the demands of self-preser-

[8] E. Renan, Histoire des langues Sémitiques, p. 14.

[9] See Benzinger, Hebraische Archäologie. S. 295 ff.

[10] E. Meyer, Geschichte des Altertums, Zweite Auflage, I: 2; S. 363.

[11] See William T. Ellis, in *The Continent* for January 19, 1911.

[12] See McCurdy, History, Prophecy and the Monuments, I, p. 29 ff.

vation and the instincts of kinship and religion. Whenever the force of circumstances compelled the smaller units to combine into a larger one, the resultant unity would be so artificial that the removal of the immediate cause for its existence would be followed, as a rule, by a falling away again of the smaller parts. Within the clan or tribe itself there has been little vested authority or political solidarity. From time immemorial the *sheik* has been, and still is, only a *primus inter pares*. His duty is merely to be a leader whenever a leader is needed, to act as umpire in disputes, to preside in the council of elders, to represent his clan or tribe in negotiations with others, and to direct in war, if he is able to do so. His decisions and advice have no binding authority, and he "cannot order the slightest punishment upon any member of the tribe."[13] The power of the *elders,* or leading men of the tribe, like that of the sheik, is not the result of delegated authority, but is dependent upon such factors as personal wisdom and bravery, the amount of one's private property and the hereditary dignity of the inner social group to which one belongs.[14] Such an organization is clearly a very imperfect one, furnishing no adequate protection either to the individual or the tribe.

Another corollary of Semitic individualism is *the persistence of the popular voice* in the affairs of established states. G. W. Thatcher calls attention to an Arabian tradition concerning Jabala ibn Aikam, prince of Ghassan, "who accepted Islam, after fighting against it, but finding it too democratic, returned to Christianity and exile."[15] The power of the Assyrian kings, their boastful public records to the contrary notwithstanding, was limited by the council of elders and by state parties, chiefly the military and priestly. In the city-states of Phoenicia, the merchant families were paramount from the earliest times, the government being monarchical only in form. The king had to act "nach dem Beschlüssen eines Beiraths, nach dem Willen der Vertreter einer patrizischer Geschlechter."[16] *The prevalence of the elective principle* in

[13] Benzinger, Article, "Law and Justice," in Ency. Bib.

[14] See Meyer, Geschichte des Altertums, Zweite Auflage, I: 2, S. 363.

[15] Ency. Brit., 11th Ed., Art., "Arabia," p. 265.

[16] Pietschmann, Die Phonizier. S. 238

Semitic governments is one of the best evidences of their democracy. In the records of the South Arabian kingdoms, there are references to seven electoral princes.[17] The kingdom of Israel had its birth in a popular election, and its frequent change of dynasties warrants Ewald's assertion that "dieses Reich wesentlich ein wahlreich blieb."[18] In Islam the first Khalifs were freely elected by the Community of the Faithful. The Kharijite sects originated in a protest against the willingness of Ali, who had been regularly elected, to arbitrate his claim with Muawiya, his rival. The validity of the principle of election has been recognized by the orthodox Moslems down to this day, the Shi'ite sects alone holding to a divine appointment or hereditary legitimacy superior to it.[19]

This strand of individualism, with its fibers of loose government and popular participation in public affairs, thus runs through Semitic history generally. Nowhere, however, is it more strikingly prominent than among the Hebrew people. Its course to the end of the monarchy we will trace in the following chapters, but we must not suppose that it disappeared with the monarchy. Individualism has been characteristic of the Hebrews as a race. It is a trait which has appeared in all their history, and is as marked today as ever. "No Jewish people or nation now exists," writes Zangwill, "no Jews even as sectarians of a specific faith with a specific center of authority such as the Catholics or the Wesleyans possess; nothing but a multitude of individuals, a mob hoplessly amorphous, divided alike in religion and political destiny. There is no common platform from which the Jews can be addressed, no common council to which any appeal can be made."[20]

Another class of checks upon the power of the king in Israel grew out of *the religious beliefs and practices of the people.* As the most disintegrating factor among Semites

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[17] See D. H. Müller, Art., "Sabeans," in Ency. Brit., 11th Ed., p. 957.

[18] Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes Israel. III, S. 447.

[19] See MacDonald, Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, p. 54.

[20] Israel Zangwill, "The Jewish Race," in *The Independent,* Aug. 10, 1911.

has been lack of capacity for organic government, so the strongest bond has been religion. It was a deep conviction with every Semite in ancient times that the social group to which he belonged, be it clan, tribe or nation, was dependent for its very existence upon a close solidarity with its god. This belief appears, for example, in the explanation which the Syrians gave of their defeat by the Israelites: "Their god is a god of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we, but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (1 K. 20:23). A change of clan relationship or a transfer of residence involved the adoption of new gods,[21] for prosperity was impossible to those "who know not the law of the god of the land" (2 K. 17:26). The idea of the god of a community being its real king and land-owner goes back to the earliest times among Semitic states. Among the early Babylonians "when one city made war upon another, it was because their gods were at feud; the territory of the city was the property of the city god, and when a treaty of delimitation was proposed, it was naturally the gods themselves who arranged it and drew up its provisions."[22] As for the Hebrews, Piepenbring is fully justified in stating that "La tendance theocratique fut si profondément enracinée en Israël qu'elle a dû faire partie de sa foi primitive."[23]

Such religious concepts made the will of the deity, as communicated through the oracle, of binding authority upon all classes of the people. The usual recipients and custodians of the oracle were *the priests,* and as in the primitive family the father was chief priest, so in the early state the king held this office. Frazer regards the king as *essentially* a priestly personage, a development from the magician or medicine man of earlier society.[24] This view finds support in the history of Semitic states. In the South Arabian kingdom of Saba, the earlier rulers were called *mukarrib,* which means presenter or offerer, i. e., priest-king. This has its parallel in Babylonia, where the early rulers bore the name *patesi,* a distinctively

[21] See Ruth 1: 16, and 1 Sam. 26: 19.

[22] King, History of Sumer and Akkad, p. 101.

[23] Piepenbring, Histoire du Peuple D'israel, p. 225.

[24] Frazer, Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship, pp. 149-152.

religious term, indicating of the one to whom it was applied that he was the representative of his god. With the increase of the secular power of the patesis, they took the title *king,* but this was not accompanied by any limitation of their priestly functions. On the contrary, they came to be looked upon as incarnate gods, worshipped both before and after death. Naram-Sin, e. g., is called the "god of Agadé."[25] This extreme position was modified with the coming of the Kassites, but the distinctively priestly character of Babylonian and Assyrian kings was never lost. It is to be noted, however, that the royal priesthood in these countries did not carry with it the support of the priesthood at large. On the contrary, the priests, owning as they did a large part of the landed property, and engaging extensively in trade and industry, possessed the power, which they often used, of causing trouble for the throne. From the reign of Tiglath-pileser III to the end of the Assyrian Empire, e. g., the internal politics of Assyria centered about the conflict between two parties, the secular or military nobles, and the priests, who were represented chiefly in Babylon. In this conflict, with its series of revolutions, only two of the kings, Sargon and Esarhaddon, supported, and were supported by, the priestly class.[26]

The Old Testament shows that in Israel, too, the kings were priests. The passages, however, are so few in which priestly functions are assigned to royalty that it is fair to suppose, as does Benzinger,[27] that this feature of the king's prerogative was not as marked here as elsewhere—a view supported also by the fact that in many contexts where both kings and priests are mentioned there is a clear differentiation of persons and functions.[28] However, the priests, as a class, certainly constituted a check upon the throne. Although they were subject in the royal towns to appointment and removal by the king, their hereditary rights were generally respected, and the integrity of their position is indicated by the existence of a definite organization among them.[29] Much of their cor-

[25] See King, History of Sumer and Akkad, pp. 106, 251, 298.

[26] See Winckler, History of Babylonia and Assyria, pp. 243-245.

[27] Benzinger, Hebraische Archäologie, S. 307.

[28] See *e. g.* Jer. 2: 8; Micah 3: 11; Ezek. 7: 26, 27.

[29] Note the phrase, "Elders of the Priests," in 2 Kings 19: 2, and Jer. 19: 1.

porate strength was due to their intimate association with the people as the custodians of their health, the guardians of their shrines, the directors of their religious observances and representatives in general before Yahweh. Their greatest power, however, issued from their relation to the divine law or *torah,* of which they were the mouthpieces, interpreters, teachers and custodians. Thus, they, and not the king, were looked upon as constituting the original fountain of justice, and every one, including the king, was subject to the law developed by their oracles and judicial decisions.

The kings, indeed, possessed judicial authority. In ancient times the chief military or political power was ipso facto supreme judge. In Ps. 2: 10, and Hosea 7: 7, *melek* and *šôphet* are used synonymously. As in Babylonia, so also in Israel, appeal from a local court to the king was perfectly in order. But the independent judicial power of the Hebrew priests not only is suggested by the constant reference throughout the Old Testament to their judicial activity, but is clearly asserted in Deuteronomy where the duties of both kings and priests are defined and superior judicial functions assigned to the latter. In Deut. 17: 8-13 e. g. the priests are given the priority in the composition of the nation's supreme tribunal, while the king, here called *šôphet,* although included, seems to be mentioned almost incidentally.[30] The exact relation between priestly and other jurisdiction is not clear, but enough is known to warrant the opinion of Stade that the king would have suppressed the priestly courts, if he had had the power to do so.[31]

Of all the checks, however, which religion supplied to limit the growth of despotism in the Hebrew monarchy, the most prominent and unique was that furnished by the growth of *the prophetic office.* The origin of this office and its early development do not concern us here. Suffice it to say that what was at first an order of men, whose utterances were ecstatic, and whose methods probably analogous to those of the *whirling dervishes* of our day (e. g. 1 Sam. 19: 24), developed, contemporaneously with the monarchy, into a group of individuals who, for religious insight, ethical perception, moral courage and strength of personality, stand out in boldest

[30] See also Deut. 19: 16-19; 21: 1-7.

[31] Stade, Geschichte des Volkes Israel. I, S. 412.

relief against the whole background of ancient times. Nothing fairly analogous to them can be found in any nation of antiquity. Their power is to be explained by various considerations. In the first place, they claimed to be, and generally were accepted to be, the direct representatives of Yahweh. Indeed, the prophetic deliverance was *torah,* possessing the same authority and requiring the same obedience as that of the priest.[32] *Thus saith Yahweh,* was the imprimatur of the prophet's utterance, and on the strength of this he could raise his voice with confidence against kings and dynasties. In the second place, the prophets were the champions of the people against all forms of social wrong. Their spirit was intensely democratic and fervidly human. They came from the people, being confined to no caste or even sex. Untrammeled by any official connection with church or state, they could speak according to the dictates of conscience alone. They were the outstanding patriots of their time. In their prophecies they frequently identified themselves with the people, as in Isa. 53, and the depth of their interest in the national welfare was revealed in outbursts of passion, like Jeremiah's, "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" (9:1). Finally, if to these two sanctions of the prophetic office, viz: the divine and the popular, one adds the personal traits of the prophets themselves, their fearlessness and independence, he can understand the influence they were able to exert upon the rulers of the nation. There were, indeed, counter-checks to this influence. The official prophetic guilds, which became increasingly aristocratic and subservient to the state, the false prophets "which divined for money" (Mic. 3:11), and the caprice and fickleness of the people, frequently thwarted the purpose of *the writing prophets* and their like. But even when their purpose was thwarted, their voice was heard with fear, and they remained to the last the most vigilant sentinels of the nation and the most intrepid denunciators of evil in high and low alike.

The religion of Yahweh was the strongest bond between the *Bᵉnê Yisraʾel.* It was a force, however, which as strongly resisted aggression as it fostered union. It developed a spirit

[32] See Isaiah 1: 10; Jer. 26: 4-6.

of violence against yokes of all kinds, whether imposed from within or without. In the course of its history, unfortunately, it became adulterated with beliefs and practices of a lower grade than its own, and this admixture weakened the nation's resistive force against personal aggrandizement; but, even then, the actual result did not seem to be so much a growth of despotism as a general demoralization of the nation entire. Throughout the course of the monarchy no Hebrew king ever entirely released his throne from checks sanctioned and sustained by the religion of Yahweh.

To complete this general survey of the factors of limitation upon the central power in Israel, a glance must be taken at *the geography of Palestine*. For of the checks thus far discussed, the political especially received strong reinforcement from the physical features of this land. Geographically, Palestine is as broken as Greece. The Lebanon ranges and the low-lying Jordan valley between them form three well-defined parallel sections running from north to south. The western Lebanon range is broken by the Plain of Esdraelon, north of which lie the plateaus and small east-and-west running ranges of Galilee, and south of which are the mountains of Samaria, which converge to form the high and broken table-land of Judaea. The range to the east of the Jordan is not so broken as its western counterpart. It is made up principally of high plateaus; but in Gilead, which is the part of this section figuring most in Hebrew history, the cross-valleys are more numerous than in either Hauran, to the north, or Moab, to the south. The diversity of physical features in Palestine is sharp within small compass. The average altitude of the table-land of Judaea is 2400 feet; the Dead Sea lies 1300 feet below sea-level. The soil of Samaria produces husbandmen; that of Judaea, shepherds. From the Jordan valley, in summer, with the temperature at 100° F., one can see snow on Hermon. In view of such diversity of soil, climate and land-formation, it is not surprising that the peoples which have inhabited Palestine have been of diverse types, and that there can be maintained there side by side, as at the present day, the most distinct forms of culture and life. The Hebrew monarchy throughout its history suffered from this lack of geographical homogeneity. It could never fully overcome the barriers which

nature had placed between the different sections of the land. The defence of the borders was always difficult, and it was next to impossible to carry on any uniform internal administration or effectively to quell any local insubordination or revolt.[33]

[33] See G. A. Smith, The Historical Geography of the Holy Land. In Chap. II will be found the source of some of the above material.

CHAPTER II.

The Period of the Judges and the First Attempts at Kingship.

The entrance of the Hebrews into the land of Canaan was accompanied by momentous changes in their habits of life and in their relations to each other. The abandonment of nomadic life for permanent settlements and agricultural pursuits involved *isolation from each other*. This was increased both by the physical features of the country and by the preoccupation of the Canaanites, whom the Israelites were able only partially to dislodge. The Canaanite cities of Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam and Megiddo, situated in the Plain of Esdraelon, separated the northern from the central tribes, while these latter were shut off from their more southern kinsmen by Har-heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim. (Jud. 1:27, 35.) Perhaps the best single evidence of this tribal isolation is Deborah's song of victory over the Canaanites, in which it appears that some of the tribes very close to the scene of conflict did not participate in it. (Jud. 5:15-17.)

Isolated thus from each other, the Hebrews gradually came to associate with their Canaanite neighbors. The cities which they failed to capture in war they assimilated in peace. Intermarriage, commercial relations, political and religious alliances broke up to a considerable extent the old tribal arrangements and formed new social units. In the town of Shechem, for example, Canaanites and Hebrews freely intermingled and called their common god by the significant name *baᶜal-bᵉrîth*. (Jud. 8:33; 9.) This amalgamating process, however, did not destroy tribal and clan consciousness among the Hebrews, but only added a new element to it. The subsequent development of the Hebrew state may be said to have resulted from the union of two bonds; a spiritual one,—the sense of racial and religious kinship, and a material one,—the prepared Canaanite soil upon which the Hebrews settled. It is literally true that the Hebrews developed their distinctive

civilization because they *remembered Yahweh* when they came to possess *cities which they had not built, houses which they had not filled, cisterns which they had not hewn, vineyard and olive trees which they had not planted.* (Deut. 6: 10-12.) In other words, the evolution of civilization here, as elsewhere, resulted from the coalescence of two different kinds of civilization.

The Canaanites influenced Hebrew life most in furnishing a model for the *organization of government on a local territorial basis.* Were it not for this, the tribes could not have passed so readily or uniformly from nomadic to settled life. The territorial unit adopted was *the city with its daughters,* i. e., its dependent villages and environs, and the government of this was vested in the heads of all the free families within it. The general name applied to these officials was *zᵉqenîm* (elders), and the number in each city varied according to the number of clans or families. In the small town of Succoth there were seventy seven. (Jud. 8: 14.) The existence of a select group of officials among the elders themselves is indicated by the use of *sarîm* in connection with *zᵉqenîm,*—a datum made use of by Sulzberger in support of his thesis that the Hebrews had a bi-cameral parliament, known in early times as the Edah, and in later times as the Am-ha-Aretz.[34]

The functions of the city elders, although different in form and of greater variety, were essentially the same as those of the elders of the tribe. They were, first and foremost, representatives of the whole body of citizens. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact that a sentence of death, pronounced by them, was carried out by the community (Deut. 17: 2-7). They were both judges and executives, being called in the former capacity *šophᵉtîm,* and in the latter *šotᵉrîm.*[35] They were also the directors of military policy (1 Sam. 11: 3) and mediators between their constituencies and outsiders (1 Sam. 16: 4).

Thus the cities with which the Hebrews became identified after their entrance into Canaan were self-governing com-

[34] M. Sulzberger, The Am-ha-Aretz.

[35] See Deut. 16: 18; Joshua 8: 33; and Nowack, Hebräische Archäology, p. 322, with note.

munities. Their relation to the monarchy when it arose will be discussed in the sequel, but it may here be added that the vigor with which they maintained their rights is indicated by the persistence of the elders' office and functions throughout the monarchy and beyond. In the settlements of the exile, the elders were still the representatives of the people and the directors of their affairs;[36] they led in the return from exile and in building the temple;[37] it was with them that the Persian governor dealt,[38] and general administrative powers were still in their hands.[39] Indeed, the Gerousia of the Greek period was without doubt a development of the Council of Elders, for "the Gerousia, the Great Synagogue and the Sanhedrin were not mushrooms which sprang up over night, but giant trees whose seeds were planted centuries before, in the minds and hearts of the people."[40]

The disorganization among the Hebrews prior to the monarchy is well described by the historian who wrote: "There was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The force which did away with this condition was the religion of Yahweh acting under the stimulus of foreign oppression. The fields and flocks belonging to the Hebrews invited raids which they found themselves unable to ward off. This meant not only destitution and oppression for them, but humiliation for Yahweh! Hence the wars of Yahweh, to defend his honor and free his land from the possession of those who were not his servants. The united effort which was thus secured was at first only local and temporary. Under the rallying cry of one who was a fit leader, the Hebrews of a certain locality would resist a raid or throw off an oppression, and, their object accomplished, conditions would resume much as before. The leader of such a move was called *šôphet,* in conformity with the ancient practice of associating the right to judge with the ability to rule. There is no evidence that the earlier of these *šôphᵉtîm*

[36] Ezek. 8: 1; 20: 1; Jer. 29: 1.

[37] Ezra 6: 7, 14.

[38] Ezra 5: 9; 6: 7.

[39] Ezra 10: 7, 8, 14.

[40] Sulzberger, The Am-ha-Aretz, p. 77.

attempted to retain special powers after their specific mission was performed, but as time went on, marked tendencies appeared in two directions; the unions of resistance became wider in scope, and the *šôph^{e}tîm* showed disinclination to resign all their powers when the crisis which called them forth had been successfully met.

The first extensive federation of the tribes was under the leadership of Deborah of Ephraim, and Barak of Naphtali, and was directed against the Canaanites of the Plain of Esdraelon and the north. The nucleus of the federation seems to have been Zebulon and Naphtali (Jud. 4:10; 5:18), but assistance was furnished by Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh, Issachar and probably Reuben (Jud. 5:14-16). However, the leaders and the federation itself disappear from view after a single victory is won.

Gideon of Manasseh also secured support in his campaigns from other tribes than his own (Jud. 6:35; 7:23, 24). But the important fact about him is that he was the first *šôphet* actually to establish permanent personal authority over his tribe. He became to all intents and purposes a king, as is evidenced by the offer of an hereditary kingship to him (Jud. 8:22), by the priestly functions which he exercised (vs. 27), and by the name of his son, Abimelech, who also became king, although not without difficulty (Jud. 9:1-6). With the death of Abimelech, however, there was no attempt to secure a succession, but "the men of Israel departed every man unto his place" (vs. 55).

Jephthah was another *šôphet* who retained his power after the performance of a special task (Jud. 11:8-11). Indeed, he would not consent to act as leader at all without the promise of continued recognition as such. He was not called king, however, but only *ro'š*.

It is important to note that in all these miniature kingships the initiative was taken by the people themselves or by their representatives. The crown was offered to Gideon by *the men of Israel* (Jud. 8:22); Abimelech was made king by *the men of Shechem* (Jud. 9:6); and it was the *elders of Gilead* who said to Jephthah *"thou shalt be our head"* (Jud. 11:8).

The path to *national* kingship was prepared by these *šôphᵉtîm,* and to a real federation of the tribes by these occasional alliances. Fortunately, this path had been prepared by the time of the appearance of the Philistine menace, for the Philistines were not an enemy which could be kept at bay by any makeshift means. It required permanent leadership, even in times of comparative peace, to secure military efficiency against them. An individual possessing the qualifications for such leadership was found by the patriot-seer Samuel in Saul of Benjamin, who, accordingly, was anointed by him to be *naghîdh* over the inheritance of Yahweh (1 Sam. 10:1). The people, however, would not fully accept Saul until he had proved his worth. An opportunity of doing this was presented in the siege of Jabesh-Gilead, to the relief of which he roused the tribes, winning a glorious victory. Then it was that "all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king" (1 Sam. 11:15).

The kingship of Saul was of a purely military kind. He did practically nothing in the way of internal administration. There was no court or cabinet, properly speaking, much less a system of royal district officials. Gibeah, Saul's farmer-home, was kept as his seat of government, a place "der weder Vergangenheit noch Zukunft hatte . . . der beste Beweis dass Saul das Organ zum König fehlte."[41] Even in military affairs his organization was very loose. There was nothing which could fairly be called a standing army, although individual military geniuses attended him (1 Sam. 14:52). Local and tribal distinctions remained very marked. Because of this the king had to rely chiefly upon his own family and tribe for support. He appointed his cousin Abner, e. g., to the chief position, next his own, in the army, and selected all his officials from Benjamin, his own tribe (1 Sam. 14:50; 22:7). The free outlaw life of David in Judæa, and the ready election of David by the Judæans after the death of Saul show how limited was Saul's control of the south of the country. Indeed, the influence of the king over his immediate attendants seems to have depended upon his ability to supply them with the rewards of booty and position (1 Sam. 22:7-8). The power

[41] Kittel, Geschichte der Hebräer, II, S. 134.

of the elders remained intact, and the wholesome respect with which they were regarded by Saul is reflected in the request he made of Samuel to honor him in their presence (1 Sam. 15:30). For the priesthood, at least under provocation, he did not show the same regard, slaughtering in one instance the priests of Nob because of their dealings with David (I Sam. 22:11ff). But undoubtedly acts of this kind only weakened his rule by alienating from his support not only the priestly class, but the rank and file of the people, to whom it was a sin thus "to fall upon the priests of Jehovah" (vs. 17). Moreover, the breach between Samuel and Saul was due to religious causes, whatever their precise nature may have been, and Saul's perception of the weakening effect upon his own position of the loss of Samuel's favor is clearly preserved in the tradition (1 Sam. 15:35), and without doubt was accountable in part for the melancholia of his later days.

The evidence thus indicates that not only was the sphere of Saul's kingship very limited, but within that sphere his authority rested upon precarious ground. He owed his elevation to a realization by the tribes that they needed a permanent military chief. No organic union was formed, only a federation for the one purpose of fighting common enemies. His rule, however, was both continuous and of an inter-tribal character, and so marked an advance over the achievement of any *šôphet,* and in turn paved the way for the greater work of unification accomplished by his successors.

As this brings us to a consideration of the fully established monarchy, a note may be added on the terms by which the Hebrew kings are designated. The ordinary term is *melek.* The corresponding Arabic root means *to possess* or *own exclusively,* and the Assyrian malâku signifies *to counsel* or *to advise.* These analogies, with the facts to which attention has already been called, viz., the growth of *patesis* into kings in Assyria, the rise of kings after *mukarribs* in South Arabia, and the synonymous use of *melek* and *šôphet* in the Old Testament, suggest that the underlying idea in the term is the possession of such political power as to make judicial decisions of binding authority.

The term *naghîdh* is used of six of the Hebrew kings, viz., Saul (1 Sam. 9:16), David (1 Sam. 13:14+), Solomon (1 K. 1:35+), Jeroboam I (1 K. 14:7), Baasha (1 K. 16:2) and Hezekiah (II K. 20:5), and almost invariably in prophetic passages in which their appointment *over Israel* or *over his people,* or *over my people Israel* is attributed to Yahweh. The term has the general sense of *leader* or *commander,*[42] and is used of rulers in various capacities, political, military and religious.[43] Its use as a substitute term for *melek* seems to be only another indication of prophetic disapproval of the whole idea of human kingship.

The term *nasî',* which, with one doubtful exception,[44] is used exclusively by Ezekiel so far as it refers to occupants of the Hebrew throne, and the term *mašîach,* which designates one as a representative of the deity, will be referred to more fully in the chapter on the Ideal Kingship.

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[42] See Isaiah 55:4, where *naghidh* is parallel to *mᵉsawweh.*

[43] Comp. Jer. 20:1; Ezek. 28:2; 1 Chron. 12:27; 26:24; 2 Chron. 32:21.

[44] 1 Kings 11:34. The Heb. back of the Gr. text did not have the word.

CHAPTER III.

The Monarchy of David and Solomon.

After the death of Saul, Abner secured the recognition of Ish-baal, Saul's son, as king "over all Israel" (2 Sam. 2:9). It was found impossible, however, to check the growing power of David, who was accepted as king in Judah, and who was popular even in the north. Hence, when Abner finally deserted Ish-baal, and the latter himself was killed, the way was open for "all the elders of Israel" to go to Hebron and anoint David king over the entire land (2 Sam. 5:3).

David's purpose to act as a national king, and, moreover, his genius for such a role, appear in the first act recorded of his reign, viz., the selection of Jerusalem as capital. Hitherto no tribe had been able to dispossess the Jebusites of this city; hence it was neutral ground and fitted to forestall prejudice. Then, too, it occupied a splendid position for defense, thereby inspiring confidence and pride. Finally, it was situated in the border land between Benjamin and Judah, and so kept David in close touch with his naturally most loyal constituents, the Judæans.

The military organization developed by David was as much superior to Saul's as his conquests were wider and more brilliant. Saul had a "captain of the host" and a loose bodyguard (I Sam. 22:6, 17), but no standing army. David, on the contrary, had a commander-in-chief of the army, a well-organized bodyguard (2 Sam. 20:23; 23:23), groups of chieftains called *The Three* and *The Thirty* (2 Sam. 23:13, 19, 23, 24), and, most important of all, a permanent fighting force with settled garrisons in conquered countries (2 Sam. 8:6, 14). With this organization he was able to win continued military successes, and at the end of his reign bequeath to his successor a kingdom of substantial peace.

The development of the monarchy is seen, furthermore, in the multiplication and growing importance of *state officials*.

Comparing 2 Sam. 20:23-26 with 1 K. 4:1-6, we see that the chief officers, outside of the military, were the *mazkîr,* or historiographer; the *šôpher,* or writer of state documents and the king's correspondence; the *'ašer ᶜal-hammas,* or overseer of the task-workers; and the royal priests. In addition to these, Solomon had an officer *over the house* (1 K. 4:6), who is probably to be identified with the household *sôken,* or treasurer; a chief in charge of the administrative officers of the provinces (1 K. 4:5, 7); cupbearers and the numerous other servants who invariably accompany an oriental court (1 K. 10:5). As theoretically all the state officials were entirely dependent upon the king, and the mere instruments of his will, a certain amount of centralism was bound to result from this system. It both developed a growing seclusion of the king from the people at large,[45] and at the same time enabled him to keep in close touch with the country's affairs, as was indicated by the current saying, "there is no matter hid from the king" (2 Sam. 18:13).

For purposes of *internal administration* David took a census of the people of the land (2 Sam. 24:4ff), and Solomon divided it into thirteen districts,[46] with a royal representative in each. In each case the object was the same, viz., provision for tax-levies, war-service and work upon public enterprises. Solomon's extensive building operations and the gratification of his tastes generally bear witness to the efficiency of the methods used.

As further indications of the strength and enterprise of the monarchy, there may be cited its *commercial activity* and the flourishing condition of its *foreign relations.* As to the former, there are references to a system of royal weights (2 Sam. 14:26) and to extensive trade operations, which were a source of royal revenue (1 K. 9:26; 10:11, 15, 22). The stability of foreign relations is seen in the final cessation of the Philistine menace, in treaties such as those with Tyre and Egypt, in the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba and in the prevailing peaceful conditions of Solomon's reign.

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[45] Note the phrase, "beholders of the face of the king," 2 K. 25:19.

[46] The twelve enumerated in 1 K. 4:7 ff, and Judah.

Both David and Solomon exercised *priestly functions.* The former, on the occasion of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, offered sacrifices and blessed the people (2 Sam. 6:17, 18); the latter, at the dedication of the temple, blessed the people and prayed (1 K. 8:14, 23, 55), and on various occasions offered sacrifices (1 K. 3:4, 15; 9:25). The sons of David are explicitly called priests (2 Sam. 8:18). Moreover, under the sponsorship of Solomon, the cults of the surrounding nations were introduced into Jerusalem and given official protection (1 K. 11:1-8), this being an outcome of the alliances he made with the nations concerned.

Large *judicial powers* were wielded by both David and Solomon. Absalom is represented as having "stolen the hearts" of the nation through his influence over those who "came to the king for judgment," and a good interpretation of the kingship is found in his plea, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land that any man who hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" (2 Sam. 15:1-6). As for Solomon, his reputation came to rest largely upon his renown as a judge (1 K. 3:28). Indeed, it was because of the well-recognized judicial authority of the king, coupled with the common practice of appeal to him, that Solomon was able to extend the royal estates as he did; for this was undoubtedly done through travesties on justice, by which land was arbitrarily appropriated and its owners reduced to serfdom. In the records preserved to us such proceedings are freely acknowledged so far as the non-Israelitish inhabitants of the land are concerned (1 K. 9:20-21), and the sequel to Solomon's reign leaves little doubt that the same policy was pursued toward the Israelites themselves. Other seemingly arbitrary acts of the king, for most of which, however, there was much more justification, were based upon his judicial authority. Among these may be mentioned David's execution of Rechab and Baanah (2 Sam. 4:12), his disposition of the property of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 16:4; 19,:29), Solomon's dispatching of Joab, Adonijah and Shimei, and his deposition of Abiathar (1 K. 2:13-46).

The government of David and Solomon, therefore, achieved no small success in overcoming the disintegrating forces existent in Israel, and in centralizing in the king large

powers which under Solomon became, in some ways, despotic. But it is to be remembered that this period in Israel's history lasted for only two generations, and was followed by a violent reaction, and, furthermore, that even during this period there were checks upon the king which operated with considerable force. It is to these that we now turn.

In the first place, we note the *continuance of local self-government.* The eldership remained unimpaired.[47] There was nothing in Solomon's division of the country into thirteen districts to suggest any change in the management of ordinary local affairs. As to the relations existing between the local officials and the royal representatives, nothing very definite can be said, but it is safe to assume that outside of special tasks assigned them, the work of the king's officers was primarily to collect revenue, and secondarily to act as appellate judges in cases where the local authorities could not or did not afford relief. This was far from destroying local initiative or self-government.

In the rise of David to power we see plainly the influence of the local units at that period. Abner, strong as he was, could not, merely by his defection, hand over the northern tribes to David, but it was necessary to enter into communication with the elders of Israel as to their desires in the matter (2 Sam. 3:17ff), and as David was made king over Judah by the "men of Judah" (2 Sam. 2:4), so "all the elders of Israel" made him king over the whole land (2 Sam. 5:1-3). In the accession of Solomon we see the workings of an established monarchy with its implication of the hereditary idea, but with no suppression of the popular voice. David's choice could not have been made effective without popular approval (1 K. 1:39, 40) any more than the schemes of Adonijah could have succeeded without the same sanction. Wines makes the interesting remark "that the right of setting aside the first born by the arbitrary will of the king is not usual in hereditary monarchies, and therefore it is probable that it was conferred upon David by the terms of the capitulation" (of the tribes at Hebron).[48] But this supposition is not at all necessary. The

[47] See *e. g.*, 2 Sam. 17: 4, 15; 1 Kings 8: 1-3.

[48] Wines, Laws of the Ancient Hebrews, p. 562.

success of David's rule was sufficient guarantee that the monarchy would remain in the possession of his family, while the strength of his personal influence, coupled, doubtless, with the popularity of Solomon, was sufficient to secure the latter's endorsement by the people against the claims of all others.

The independent power of the people, as expressed in their local associations, appears indirectly in the attitude of both David and Solomon toward the nation at large. This attitude was one of positive distrust. David refused to commit the defence of his throne and his personal safety to his own countrymen, but entrusted it to foreigners—the Pelethites, Cherethites and Gittites. These constituted his bodyguard, and to them he turned in the hours of greatest danger (2 Sam. 15:18; 20:7). Moreover, when he selected his officials from among the Hebrews, he preferred his own kinsmen to all others (2 Sam. 19:11-13). In the case of Solomon, it was this same distrustful spirit which led him to ignore the natural divisions of the country for administrative purposes. There is every reason to believe that the wholesome respect for existing local authority, which David showed at the very beginning of his reign in sending presents to the elders of the cities of Judah, remained a characteristic of the kingship throughout this period of the monarchy (1 Sam. 30:26-31).

Still again, the throne's limitations were revealed by the *instigation of rebellions* against it. In David's time the chief of these were Absalom's, in which the original conspirators were Judæan tribesmen of the king (2 Sam. 15:9-12), and Sheba's, in which the line of cleavage was tribal (2 Sam. 20). Hence, we note the unchecked insubordination of the Hebrews both as individuals and in their group connections. During the reign of Solomon, there was no revolution so far as the records go, but the factors which make for revolution were present; they were kept in check, indeed, by the glories of a reign which fascinated the popular mind in spite of the hardships imposed, but with the hand of Israel's grand monarch removed, the old intolerance of restraint again appeared in revolutionary form.

Furthermore, it cannot be supposed that the state officials themselves did not possess and assert rights which tended to check the free exercise of the royal will. Solomon, at the be-

ginning of his reign, made use of his personal popularity and of the pretext afforded by Adonijah's attempted usurpation, to clean the slate of political enemies, and the glitter of his court seems to have dazed his servants into a considerable degree of submissiveness as long as he lived; but the action of Jeroboam, who, while still a state official, had the courage "to raise his hand against the king" (1 K. 11:26), and the advice of Solomon's ministers that Rehoboam should be more lenient than his father (1 K. 12:6, 7), show that Solomon could not keep all of his servants in an attitude of fawning approval. David found it impossible to curb the arbitrary conduct of his general, Joab, who, against the king's wish and with impunity, murdered both Abner and Amasa, and who felt free to criticise his lord (2 Sam. 3:24, 25). The plaint of David that "these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me" (2 Sam. 3:39), may well express the attitude of both David and Solomon toward other ministers whose names have not come down to us.

Finally, *religious forces* were active in combating royal arbitrariness during this period. It was not yet the time of the great prophets, but in the activities of men like Gad, Nathan and Ahijah, we see the beginnings of that fierce condemnation of social wrong, and of the courage to put the blame where it belongs, so characteristic of the later messengers of Yahweh. Gad protested against an enumeration of the people for revenue purposes (2 Sam. 24); Nathan condemned David for the violation of another's home and for murder (2 Sam. 12); Ahijah protested against the oppression of Solomon (1 K. 11:26ff), and in no one of these cases is there any evidence that the prophet was harmed for his conduct. On the contrary, the royal attitude was, and continued to be, one of respect for the prophetic office. Moreover, Solomon's introduction of foreign religious cults into the land, accompanied as this was, not only by the inflow of foreign wealth and ideas, but by a growing moral and religious laxity, only tended to undermine his monarchy. For, on the one hand, the strongest national bond which existed—the religion of Yahweh—was thereby weakened, and on the other, the ire of the Yahwistic party, which stood for the old civilization as against the new, was so aroused that it did what it could to hasten the disruption of the monarchy and to discourage attempts at re-

union after the break had come (1 K. 12:22-24). The religion of Yahweh encouraged union among its true adherents, but it preferred disunion to surrender.

The supreme proof, however, of the restricted nature of David's and Solomon's power is found in the Jeroboam revolt, and in the permanent national schism which was created thereby.

CHAPTER IV.

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

The split of the Hebrew monarchy into two parts was occasioned by the oppression of Solomon, but its fundamental causes lay much deeper. From the very beginning of the Hebrew occupation of Canaan, Judah had maintained its identity as against the tribes to the north. It had fought its way into southern Palestine with the help only of Simeon, and throughout the period of the Judges pursued its own course. Deborah failed even to mention it as a source from which aid might be expected for the alliance formed by herself and Barak. Nominally Judah was a part of Saul's kingdom, but we have seen how uncertain its support was. Conversely, when the kingdom under David was established on a Judæan base, the loyalty of the north became subject to suspicion—a suspicion confirmed by the jealousies and rebellions of David's reign, and by Solomon's method of districting the land. The fact that the terms *Judah* and *Israel,* as designations for the south and north, respectively, are used conjointly to express the idea of all Israel, even in early narratives,[49] shows how deep-seated this distinction was. The basis of the Jeroboam revolt was as old as the settlement in Palestine; nay, older. The real preparation for it is to be found in those individualistic traits which were prominent in Hebrew character from the beginning, and which, although checked, could not be subdued by an oppression such as Solomon's.

The circumstances attending the accession of Rehoboam and Jeroboam's revolt reveal several facts germane to our thesis. In the first place, we note that Rehoboam *went to Shechem* to be made king by "all Israel" (1 K. 12:1). This procedure in itself showed a lack of cordial support on the part of the northern tribes. David could have selected no better capital than Jerusalem, but evidently neither its natural

[49] See *e. g.,* 1 Sam. 11: 8; 17: 52; 2 Sam. 11: 11.

fitness nor the prestige which it had acquired by two long and brilliant reigns were able to remove tribal prejudice. Without doubt, Rehoboam was acclaimed king in Jerusalem, but his journey to the north is explained only on the ground that, whatever the local enthusiasm of this acclamation may have been, it lacked all signs of possessing a national character. Furthermore, in the deliberations between king and people in Shechem, it is clear that the people, while recognizing the hereditary claims of Rehoboam, retained the right to accept or reject him, according as he promised or refused to rule in harmony with their desires. Rehoboam theoretically recognized this right when he took the people's proposals into consideration for three days, and no finer definition of the Hebrew idea of kingship can be found than that which the tradition assigns to Rehoboam's elderly advisors, who said: "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day and wilt serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever" (1 K. 12:7). The protest of the tribes was not against the kingdom *per se*, but against royal arbitrariness, and when the protest was not heeded, they rebelled, and Jeroboam was raised by popular acclaim to the throne (vs. 20). The ease with which the revolution was accomplished shows how artificial the centralism of David and Solomon was. By such simple means as the rehabilitation of ancient shrines to counteract the influence of the Jerusalem temple, the breach between the north and the south was made permanent (vs. 26-29).

It is no part of our purpose to trace the varying fortunes of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It is sufficient to point out, by way of contrast between the two, the greater stability of the kingdom of Judah. This was due to many causes, among which may be mentioned a greater racial and geographical solidarity, less exposure to attack because of better natural protection and more isolated position, and, lastly, the prestige of a permanent royal line with direct descent from David and Solomon. But of necessity the two kingdoms influenced each other, and, in general, their resemblances exceeded their differences. There were corresponding social and religious developments in each, and, so far as the king was concerned, similar restrictions and powers.

We note, first, certain demoralizing tendencies of the period with their results upon the position of the king. The most important of these was *the break-up of the social democracy of the nation.*. Class distinctions arose—the inevitable outcome of the protracted wars of the two kingdoms, and intensified by their commercial activity. The system of state officials only aggravated the situation by offering an opportunity for selfish aggrandizement under royal protection, with resulting cruelty and injustice. Hence, the poor and the rich, the officials and those without court connections, became hostile toward each other. This development was not prominent for some time subsequent to the division of the monarchy. In Judah especially, there seems to have been a reaction against Solomon's orientalism and a resumption of simple ways, which lasted for upwards of a century. During the second quarter of the 8th century, however, in the contemporary reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II, comparative peace prevailed, trade flourished, wealth rolled into Samaria and Jerusalem, and marked social classes appeared. The princes or officials henceforth assumed a most important role in both governments, and in the last days of the Judæan state, practically turned the monarchy into an oligarchy. The whole movement, of course, weakened the nation's democratic spirit, but so far as the king was concerned, it gave rise to the new check of a rich and well-entrenched aristocracy—a check well illustrated in the relation of Zedekiah to his princes, to whom he said, "the king is not he that can do anything against you" (Jer. 38: 5).

Foreign interference, with its accompanying wars and rumors of wars, was another devitalizing force. The Syrians, Assyrians, Egyptians and Babylonians, by appropriating territory, imposing tribute or simply depleting the population, gradually wore out the Israelites and Judæans. These things not only impoverished them, but led to many distractions and much party wrangling, and in the end to the humiliation of having their kings appointed for them by foreign rulers. But here again the situation gave rise to a new form of check upon the royal power. Parties arose which were differentiated from each other according to their proposals of self-defense, alliance or submission. The king was not only unable to control these parties, but his very safety depended upon his attach-

ment to the one which at the time was strongest. Pekahiah in Israel lost his life because the pro-Assyrian party, to which he and his father belonged, fell into disfavor (2 K. 15:19-26, 29), and probably the murder of Amon in Judah was due to the increasing strength of the prophetic party, which, in Josiah's reign, stood for self-reliance and opposed all foreign connections. During the last days of both kingdoms, the king was little more than a puppet alternately in the hands of foreign rulers and local parties.

A third disintegrating factor was the continuance of *compromise in religion.* During the periods of Phœnician, Syrian and Assyrian influence, religious innovations from these sources took their place beside Yahweh worship, becoming entrenched even in the sacred precincts of the Jerusalem temple (Ezek. 8). Such compromises could not but impair the national unity, for they weakened the strongest bond which held the Hebrews together. *The sin of Jeroboam* was his degrading of the cult in Israel to a plane lower than that which the best Yahweh worship had reached, for in setting up the worship of Yahweh under the image of a bull, there was a clear adaptation to Canaanitish nature-worship, from which the Jerusalem temple at the time was free, and in the selection of priests "from among all the people" (1 K. 12:31; 13:33), the king showed clearly enough that his purpose in religious supervision was of a political nature. This policy, though temporarily successful, was bound to result disastrously to both the nation and the throne; to the nation, because of the demoralization which Syrian nature-rites inevitably produced; and to the throne, because of the reaction against this policy on the part of the spiritually minded, under the leadership of the prophets of Yahweh. The sin of Jeroboam was an important contributing cause in making the northern kingdom for a long time the scene of much greater prophetic activity than the southern. But in Judah, too, the prophets, when they did appear, were called forth largely in opposition to religious compromise, so that this tendency also, like the others we have mentioned, may be said to have called into being new checks upon royalty, while vitiating to some extent the old.

These special tendencies, however, modifying though their influence was, did not destroy the old forces and con-

ditions which were restrictive of centralized power. *Local and tribal separateness* was never overcome. The ease with which the Syrians, and later the Assyrians (2 K. 15:29), overran the territory north of Esdraelon shows what a breach there was between Galilee and its southern neighbors. The territory east of the Jordan received the same scant protection against invaders, and its practical independence is illustrated in the statement, which is given as a special note, that Pekah, in his rebellion against Pekahiah, had the assistance of "fifty men of the Gileadites" (2 K. 15:25). Isaiah portrayed the antagonism even of tribes closely related, in the striking passage—"they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm; Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall be against Judah" (Isa. 9:20, 21). The isolation of the cities of the land was just as great in the Assyrian campaigns as at the Hebrew conquest (2 K. 15:29; 18:13), and in the organization of the military by city-units it is possible to detect a furthering cause of this isolation (Amos. 5:3).

This separateness of existence was accompanied by *independence of local administration.* The elders remained in high esteem and of great importance. According to Isaiah, they were among the most valuable assets of Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 3:1, 2). The kings took counsel of them in matters of foreign (1 K. 20:7, 8) and domestic (2 K. 23:1) policy. Their judicial rights remained intact. Ahab, for example, found it impossible to secure the property of Naboth without judicial authorization by the people's representatives, viz., the *s^{e}qenîm* and the *hôrîm* (1 K. 21); and in the trial of Jeremiah it is notable that his accusers did not go to Jehoiakim for judgment, but to the *^{e}am,* whom Sulzberger, with great plausibility in this passage, argues to be elders or representatives of the people[50] (Jer. 26:8ff). In the organization of the courts attributed to Jehoshaphat, there is no indication that he interfered with the customary rights of local officials. He was concerned mainly with establishing a system of appeal, and so far as his lay appointments are specified, they were from "the heads of the fathers' houses" (2 Chron. 19:5ff). Stade asserts that it was in judicial matters that the old clan organization

[50] Sulzberger, The Am-ha-Aretz, pp. 42-50.

gave the longest and most powerful opposition to the king.[51] This is doubtless true, and, of course, it would be just at this point where such opposition would involve the greatest check upon the royal power.

The independent strength of the people as a whole is seen, furthermore, in *the control which they kept over the succession of their kings*. In Judah the royal line was fixed; nevertheless each succeeding king was raised to the throne by the people, as is expressly stated in the case of Joash (2 K. 11:12, 13); Uzziah (2 K. 14:21); Josiah (2 K. 21:23, 24) and Jehoahaz (2 K. 23:30). The kingdom of Israel started in a popular election, and the elective principle never became subject to a fixed hereditary line. Indeed, so democratic were the tribes of the north that one wonders if Solomon's succession to David without their formal consent, or if Rehoboam's succession to Solomon, prior to any consultation with them, did not have something to do with the Jereboam revolt. But not only did the people control the succession of their kings; on occasion they deposed them. In Judah, under the leadership of Jehoiada, they deposed Athaliah (2 K. 11:13-16). In Israel the overthrow of the successive dynasties was accomplished by military chieftains, usually captains of the host, who ranked next to the king (2 K. 4:13), and who were thus in a position to curry personal favor from the fighting strength of the nation (1 K. 16:9, 16; 2 K. 9:5; 15:25). It is true that the success of their intrigues was due as much to their individual genius as to any spontaneous popular action, but this only makes clearer the fact that the throne rested upon very transient values and was practically without guarantees of support. In Judah there was a counter-check in the people's inbred loyalty to the established Davidic line, but in Israel there was little, if any, restraint to keep them from withdrawing their allegiance at will.

The kings continued to exercise priestly and religious functions. They were the chief supervisors of religion, setting up altars, high places, asherim and pillars, (1 K. 16:32; 2 K. 21:3ff), or destroying the same (2 K. 3:2; 18:4). They sacrificed and burnt incense (1 K. 12:27-33; 2

[51] Stade, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, I, S. 411.

Chron. 25:14). They collected money for religious purposes (2 K. 12:4ff; 22:4), and exercised freedom in the use of temple treasures (2 K. 16:8; 18:15). Ahaz not only acted as a priest himself, but issued commands for the whole arrangement of the temple cult (2 K. 16:10ff). The priests, as a class, however, although at times manifesting subservience to the king (e. g. 2 K. 16:11ff), at other times exhibited splendid aggressiveness. It was Jehoiada, the priest, who inspired and directed the conspiracy which removed Athaliah and put Joash on the throne (2 K. 11), and possibly the prestige acquired for the priesthood by this memorable act had something to do with the struggle between it and the throne, vouched for by the Book of Chronicles. There it is recorded that Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, outspokenly opposed Joash and in so doing lost his life (2 Chron. 24:15-22), while later an encounter between Uzziah and the priesthood led to consequences which were serious for the king (2 Chron. 26:17-20). Kittel is certainly right in saying that there is no good reason summarily to reject this tradition.[52] It is not inconsistent with the representation of Kings and it harmonizes well with the independent spirit of the Hebrew people.

The restrictions which were imposed upon the kings of this period by customary and written law have already been referred to in part. Such acts as the purchase of the hill of Samaria by Omri (1 K. 16:24) show that the right of private property was respected. Indeed, this right was so well entrenched that when Ahab tried to override it in his dealings with Naboth, he was at his wits' end and accomplished his purpose only by a resort to underhanded methods, which, however, were carried out in full conformity with the law (1 K. 2:1). It is certain, moreover, that this manifest perversion of justice was one of the causes which led to the overthrow of his dynasty by Jehu (2 K. 9:25, 26). The safety of private property to the very end of the Judæan kingdom is indicated by Jeremiah's purchase of real estate from his cousin (Jer. 32:6-15). Such facts as these suggest that the picture of the kingdom drawn in 1 Sam 8:10ff has to do only with special periods and individual instances and not with the usual con-

[52] Kittel, Geschichte der Hebräer, II, S. 281.

dition of affairs. *The Deuteronomic law of the king,* to which Josiah at least definitely subscribed (2 K. 23:3), stated that the king was as much subject to law as the people, and, indeed, that it was his special duty to study the law and obey it "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren" (Deut. 17:18-20). The covenant which Josiah and all the people made before Yahweh implied a common recognition of the divine sanction of law and involved an obligation on the part of the king to the people, and of the people to the king, to obey it (2 K. 23:1-3). The same was true of the covenant which Jehoiada made "between Jehovah and the king and the people that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people" (2 K. 11:17). The position of the priesthood in both of these transactions is noteworthy. In the case of Jehoiada, it was a priest who administered the covenant, while in the case of Josiah, it was a priest from whom was secured the law to which the king subscribed.

We come finally to a consideration of the prophets in their relation to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. For the first two centuries after the disruption, their activities were much greater in the north than in the south—a fact which is to be attributed partly to the existence of schools of the prophets in the north, and partly to the reaction against the Tyrian prophets of Baal introduced by Ahab. But with the rise of the great writing prophets in the 8th century, Judah also came under their spell and remained so to the downfall of the state. There was no class of men which the kings of Judah and Israel more respected or feared. Their spirit of freedom in denouncing kings as well as others was irrepressible. Amos prophesied against the house of Jeroboam and the royal sanctuaries of Israel with impunity, for seemingly the only thing which Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, could do was to advise him to return to Judah (Amos. 7:8ff). Jeremiah uttered his prophecies of destruction within the temple area adjoining the royal palace, but when he was imprisoned, it was for a supposedly treacherous act, and not for his words (Jer. 37:11-15). The influential standing of the prophets appears in the fact that the kings repeatedly went to them for advice. Ahab inquired of them whether he should go up against the Syrians (1 K. 22:6); Hezekiah sent to Isaiah at the time of Sennacherib's invasion

(2 K. 19:2); and although Jeremiah censured "the shepherds" because they did not "enquire of Yahweh" (Jer. 10:21), Zedekiah brought him secretly from prison to ascertain what the divine will was (Jer. 37:16-17). In the field of politics the prophets worked actively, and on questions of national policy their notions were very set. The division of the kingdom was favored and promoted by Ahijah (1 K. 11:29ff), and by Shemaiah (1 K. 12: 22-24). Elijah and Elisha undoubtedly had much to do with the revolution of Jehu (1 K. 19:16; 2 K. 9:1-6). Isaiah antagonized with great zeal the idea of any alliance with Egypt, and the strength of his influence at court is shown by the fact that the preparations for such an alliance were concealed from him (Isa. 30:1-5; 31:1-3). Jeremiah preached his politics incessantly, and in the royal presence with as much freedom as elsewhere, as when he said to Zedekiah, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, * * * and live" (Jer. 27:12). Of course the degree of success achieved by the prophets varied according to such factors as the strength of their own personalities, the measure of popular support which they received, and the vindication in one way or another of their prophecies. Hezekiah's reform, for example, was the result of the prophetic leadership of men like Isaiah and Micah (Jer. 26:18, 19), in conjunction with the vindication of Yahweh's power as seen in the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, and the consequent popular support given to prophetic measures. Conflicts of opinion between the prophets themselves, such as that between Jeremiah and Hananiah (Jer. 28), weakened their individual and combined strength. It was of this that Jeremiah complained when he said "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31). Yet this plaint itself bears witness to the dignity and power of the prophetic office at its best. The kings of Israel and Judah could neither ignore nor suppress it. Indeed, Ewald calls the most characteristic feature of the northern kingdom "der Gegensaz der königlichen und der prophetischen Gewalt,"[53] and of Judah the same may be said from the days of Isaiah on, if with the king is included the aris-

[53] Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, III, S. 448.

tocracy. The prophets owed their authority to no official position, but simply to the common right of free speech in the name of God. No better proof could be had of the democracy of the Hebrew people or of the continuance of their early individualistic spirit throughout the period of their single and separate kingdoms.

CHAPTER V.

The Ideal Kingship.

Their experience with the rule of kings made it natural for the Hebrews to express their deepest longings, particularly when a crisis was on, in monarchical terms. Thus there arose ideals of kingship, and no sketch of the Hebrew monarchy would be complete were these not considered. Important for our purpose, a study of them will reveal the ideal limitations put by the people upon their kings, and thus throw light upon the actual limitations as we have observed them to exist, and bring into clearer relief the whole political genius of the nation. It will not be necessary for us to trace the development of these ideals during the monarchy, nor the modifications to which they were subjected in post-monarchical times. The important fact is that however they differed in detail, there ran through them, from first to last, certain great governmental principles in which we see confirmed our thesis of a limited monarchy in Israel.

These principles may be summed up in two propositions: First, *the king is the true representative of the nation's God;* and, second, *the king is the true representative of the nation he rules.* Hence, the checks upon his power are fundamentally two, viz., *the divine will,* and *the social conscience.* In the course of the chapter we shall first consider the king in his relation to God, then in his relation to the people, and finally give some concrete idealizations of him in which may be seen the expression of both these relationships.

The real king of Israel was Yahweh—a thought abundantly expressed in the Psalms and the Prophets. When the human kingship arose, Yahweh's rule did not cease, but was only modified by making the human king his representative. Their relationship to each other is revealed by the titles and descriptive epithets which were applied to the human king. Important among these was *mašîach,* anointed one. The oil, by the use of which in anointing, kings were consecrated to

their office, symbolized the Spirit of Yahweh himself. The anointing of Saul, e. g., was attended by the coming of the Spirit of Yahweh upon him (1 Sam. 10:1, 6, 10), and when David was anointed, it is stated that the Spirit of Yahweh "came mightily" upon him "from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13). Hence, a *mašîach,* possessing Yahweh's spirit, was ipso facto his representative, even to the extent of being inviolable (1 Sam. 24:7; 26:9). All the kings of the Hebrews were undoubtedly inducted into office with the ceremony of anointing (e. g. 1 K. 1:39; 2 K. 11:12), but it is a striking fact that the title *mašîach* is not given to any of them except, as it were, idealistically. Outside of the Saul and David narratives, it is used only in late passages, probably all post-monarchical. At any rate, it is never applied to a Hebrew king in a contemporary historical or prophetic passage. It is employed only by fond memory or hopeful anticipation. This throws light upon the Hebrews' estimate of their monarchy. They probably never denied, in their thinking of any individual king, the implicates of the title *mašîach,* but their use of the title shows that it represented conditions which were more ideal than real. In the later hopes of the Jewish people it came to be the designation, *par excellence,* of their ideal king.

Two other titles which designated the ideal king as Yahweh's representative were *ben,* son, and *ᶜebhed,* servant. Examples of the former are found in 2 Sam. 7:14 and Ps. 2:7; of the latter in 2 Sam. 3:18 and Jer. 33:21, 26. These words have two features in common; they refer, as titles of royalty, only to David or the Davidic dynasty, and they are used of the people as a whole as well as of the king. Israel is called Yahweh's son, e. g., in Ex. 4:22, 23 and Hosea 11:1, and Yahweh's servant in Isa. 41:8 and Jer. 46:27, 28. Hence, as the nation itself was representative of Yahweh, so also the nation's kings. It is interesting to note that the titles *ᶜebhed* and *mašîach* are used virtually as synonyms in Ps. 89:51, 52.

The perfect harmony between Yahweh and the ideal king is revealed furthermore in expressions where the two are closely associated or even identified. The following may serve as examples: "They shall serve Jehovah, their God, and David, their king" (Jer. 30:9); "In that day * * * the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them"

(Zech. 12:8); "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king" (1 Chron. 29:23). In the development of the doctrine of the Messianic King, he and Yahweh seem almost interchangeable. Now one and now the other acts as the direct leader and protector of their people. To quote Gressmann: "Die Funktionem beider sind fast noch identisch. Der Messias wird mehr als ein zum Gott erhobener König, Jahwe mehr als ein zum König erhobener Gott beschrieben."[54]

Hence, a clear limitation upon the power of the king in the ideal monarchy was *the will of God,* whose representative he so truly was. This limitation may be illustrated by two verses from the Psalms: "If thy (David's) children will keep my covenant and my testimony * * * their children also shall sit upon thy throne" Ps. 132:12. "If his (David's) children forsake my law, and walk not in mine ordinances * * * then I will visit their transgression with the rod" Ps. 89:30, 32.

The ideal king, moreover, was a true representative of the people. This is suggested by the fact to which reference has already been made that the same terms, viz., *ben* and *ᶜebhed,* were used to describe the relation in which both king and people stood to their God. Furthermore, we have such expressions as "their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them" (Jer. 30:21), and "he (the Branch) shall grow up out of his place" (Zech. 6:12). But most important of all are those passages which refer to the ideal king as being of the seed of Abraham, or, more specifically, of the line of David. Among these may be mentioned the Genesis covenant passages (17:6; 35:11); those in which the coming king is directly called "my servant David" (Jer. 33:21; Ezek. 37:25), and those in which his descent from David is clearly stated (Micah 5:1; Jer. 23:5). The idea of this organic connection between king and people arose early; we find it expressed e. g. in the Deuteronomic law of the king (17:5); but nothing shows better how deep-seated it was than this close and long-continued association of the coming ruler with David, around whom clustered the most popular traditions of the Hebrew people. It may be

[54] Gressmann, Ursprung der Israelitisch-Juedischen Eschatologie, S. 301.

added that in the sublimer reaches of prophecy the ideal king became in a way the representative of the nations at large. He was to transcend the Aaronic priesthood and become "a priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). He was also to be a "light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6; 49:6), for although this expression was originally used of Israel as the servant of Yahweh, harmonistic exegesis applied it also to the Messianic King (Enoch 48:4; Luke 2:32).

As the true representative of the people, the ideal king was subject to the demands of the social conscience. He was to express in his own person and try to perfect in the life of the nation its highest ideals. He was to be a king who would "reign in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1), hating wickedness (Ps. 45:8) and executing judgment and justice in the earth (Jer. 23:5). He would fight to deliver his people from oppression and then inaugurate a reign of peace (Micah 5:5; Jer. 23:6). The idea of a suffering Messiah, and the application of such a passage as Isa. 53 to the Messianic King did not have any vogue until the Christian era,[55] but the ideal king's fullest sympathy with the sufferings of his people is assumed everywhere. Probably the best single picture of the ideal king, so far as his relations with the people are concerned, is that preserved in the 72d Psalm. There we see a ruler who judges with perfect righteousness, whose full sympathy is with the poor and oppressed, whose chief glory is in righting human wrong, whose reign is attended by the prosperity of peace and plenty, and whose name is revered by all he rules.

Israel's ideal king, therefore, represented two parties, viz., his God and his people, to both of whom he was faithful. It is remarkable to what extent this double relationship underlies all the descriptions of him which have come down to us. It appears even in single verses, such as 2 Sam. 23:3, "One that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God"; or Jer. 30:21. "And their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them, * * * and he shall approach unto me" (Yahweh). Isaiah, in the description of 11:1-5, starts with a statement of the ideal king's relation to the people—"there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse"; then

[55] See Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Div. 2, II, pp. 184-6.

comes a statement of his relation to Yahweh—"the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him"; and the conclusion (vs. 3-5) is a statement of the logical outworkings of this double relationship.

The most notable feature of the future ruler described by Ezekiel is the humility of his position. This appears in his title, which was *nasî'* instead of *melek,* and in a corresponding limitation of his functions. Indeed, he was to be little more than the chief patron of the church. Ezekiel's conception was undoubtedly due to his total lack of sympathy with the conduct of the monarchy in his own day. It is really an indication of the strength which the monarchical institution had in the minds of the people that he incorporated it, even in modified form, in his ideal state. However, this *nasî',* with all his limitations, was yet Yahweh's servant (34:23, 24), and by providing sacrifices on all the feast days for the nation at large, he showed, in about the only way open to him, his national representative capacity (45:17, 22). His actions, furthermore, were to be free from oppression and in accord with the principle of righteousness (45:9-12; 46:18).

Little is said of the ideal king in the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, but with the rise of Apocalyptic, especially after the overthrow of the Maccabean dynasty, he comes into prominence again, only in a changed form. The harsh treatment to which the Jews had been subjected begot a harsh disposition toward their oppressors, and, indeed, toward all who were outside the pale of their faith. Hence the ideal king assumed a more terrible aspect. He became more closely associated with *the power* of God, and, particularly, more severe in his treatment of the heathen. And yet he remained the representative, *par excellence,* of the deity and the nation, and continued to rule in accord with the divine will and the principle of justice to all men. In the Sibylline Oracles he is a king, sent of God, who will put a stop to all war, and, in everything he does, will act "not according to his own counsel, but in obedience to the decrees of the Great God" (III:652-6). In the Psalms of Solomon, he is a son of David, "a righteous king and one taught of God" (XVII:35).[56] A discussion of

[56] See Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Div. 2, II, p. 140 ff.

Daniel's *Son of Man* (7:13) as a messianic title[57] does not come within our bounds, but unless one regards its use as purely mechanical, it indicates another point of contact between the ideal king and the people he rules. Finally it is interesting to note that the recorded words of Jesus which describe the general nature of his mission, imply a recognition of the two-fold relationship and corresponding obligations of the ideal king. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20:28).

These idealizations did not arise merely because of a general dissatisfaction with the rule of the historic kings. The shortcomings of the kings and the final destruction of the monarchy undoubtedly had much to do with throwing the ideal picture into clearer relief. But the principles involved were nation-old. The Hebrew genius in government always displayed two sides; it was religious and it was democratic. The historic monarchy never measured up to the ideal, but it could not overthrow the ideal. From first to last, though successively modified by the personal equation of each king and his contemporaries, it was hedged about by two cardinal limitations, viz., God's law and the people's will.

[57] See Enoch 46: 1, 2; 48, 2, etc.

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